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Pine Nut Land Health Project

Quarterly Update

BLM Project Contacts

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Project Overview

The Sierra Front Field Office (SFFO) signed a Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact on the Pine Nut Land Health Project Environmental Assessment (EA) on April 29, 2014. The Pine Nut Land Health Project will treat approximately 24,564 acres and will be implemented over a 10 to 15 year period.

A large focus of the project is the complete removal of pinyon-juniper trees in sage-brush areas in order to maintain and/or create additional sage-grouse habitat and movement corridors. This may occur on up to

15,000 acres in areas where sage-grouse have been identified as present by recent telemetry studies. The other prescription proposed for medium and high density woodland stands (9,500 acres) is selective thinning to achieve the following goals:

- Fuel hazard reduction
- Riparian stand health and hydrologic function
- Woodland stand health and diversity
- Forest product removal as a by-product of treatments

Partners

The actions will build upon previous fuel hazard reduction projects and expand the scope of vegetation treatments to address an entire landscape in an integrated approach. Project partners include:

- Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW)
- Great Basin Institute (GBI)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
- East Fork Fire
- Great Basin Bird Observatory
- Conservation Districts
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)
- Pinyon-juniper Partnership
- Bently Ranch

Annual Project Meeting – Save the Date!

The annual meeting is an opportunity to coordinate all upcoming project activities with BLM and project partners. An agenda will be developed and sent to current and potential partners by the end of January 2015. Please let us know if you have any agenda items. Feel free to invite other potential project partners.

When: Friday, February 27, 2015
9:00 am to 11:30 am

Where: Carson City District Office
5665 Morgan Mill Road
Carson City, NV 89701

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Completed treatments and monitoring

Sage-grouse Treatments

Hand removal treatments were completed on 2,210 acres of the Mill Canyon unit, 177 acres in the Illinois unit and the entire 969 acre Lyon unit (completed December 2014).

Woodland Health Thinning

Roadside thinning along Sunrise Pass continued in the fall of 2015, with a total of 69 acres treated. Public can collect firewood from the treatment area. Slash piles will be burned this winter, weather permitting.

Monitoring

Since 2011, USGS has been actively collaring sage-grouse to track their movement in the Pine Nut Mountain Range. As funding allows this monitoring will continue for several years and will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of sage-grouse habitat enhancement treatments. Other monitoring includes vegetation response and migratory bird nesting and foraging use.

On the horizon

Sage-grouse Treatments

Hand removal treatments will be done in the fall of 2015 on the remaining 2,412 acres of the Mill Canyon Unit. This contract is being prepared by NDOW through the Nevada Partners in Conservation Program. The priority Bald Mtn unit would be treated in the fall of 2015, using BLM fire personnel after the conclusion of fire season.

Woodland Health Thinning

Great Basin Institute was awarded the Sunrise Pass Stewardship Contract, which treats 80 acres of the Illinois unit, and will generate approximately 160 cords of wood. They anticipate starting the actual treatments in September of 2015. Roadside thinning along Sunrise Pass will continue in the fall of 2015.

Fuel Hazard Reduction

Contract preparation will be done for approximately 189 acres in the Ruehenstroth Unit. Work will be started in the fall of 2015. Prep work is beginning on the 769 acre Sunrise Pass Unit, with plans of a contract award by the end of FY15.

Riparian Restoration

Unit layout and contract preparation is ongoing for the El Dorado and Illinois Canyon Units. Nevada Division of Wildlife received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for restoration of migratory bird habitat in these major riparian communities. Work will begin in the fall of 2015 on approximately 150 acres.



"Our goal is to conserve habitat necessary to sustain Greater and Bi-state populations and reduce the likelihood of listing under the Endangered Species Act."

Amy Lueders 12/5/12
State Director
BLM Nevada



Fig. 1. Mill Canyon Project After Treatment